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FROM: Kika de la Garza

WASHINGTON, D C -- Three days of hearings before my Agriculture Subcommittee on Departmental Operations brought out interesting information about the U S Agriculture Department's marketing programs. The testimony of witnesses showed clearly the need for having the Department's marketing functions consolidated into a single administrative agency rather than scattered, as they are now, among several agencies with no dominating leadership.

Twenty-five years ago, in passing the Agriculture Marketing Act, Congress paid heed to this situation in a report accompanying the bill:

"It is generally recognized and admitted that many of the major and most pressing problems in agriculture lie in the field of marketing and distribution. . . . Unless intensive research is carried out to improve the processes of distributing agricultural products capable of being produced in abundance, many of the benefits and improvements developed through research in the field of productivity will be dissipated. Production is but half the problem. It is equally important, if agriculture and the nation are to prosper, that there be an efficient marketing system to distribute in an economical and orderly manner that which is produced."

The intent of Congress is clear. But in recent years the whole subject of marketing has been receiving too little attention, or scattered attention, in the Agriculture Department. The direction and conduct of marketing activities have been fragmented in the Department. As a result, agencies given responsibility for various marketing activities find that their major responsibilities are in other fields and so they give little attention to the small segments of marketing work assigned to them in addition to their other duties.

* * * *

IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING -- The system of producing agricultural products in the U S cannot exist without an efficient setup to move these products to consumers, who depend on the system for an adequate supply of food. It now costs about \$68 million per year for food marketing, while farmers receive only about \$33 million for the food they produce. Obviously, the possibilities of bringing about savings in costs are substantially greater in marketing than in farming.

The Department's Agricultural Research Service does great work. But the type of work it does involves more productivity than marketing. Such matters as wholesaling, retailing, transportation, packaging, care and handling of such South Texas products as fresh fruits and vegetables, for example, are marketing functions. Congress must have had

just such activities in mind when it directed the Secretary of Agriculture to bring marketing functions together 25 years ago. Marketing problems are different from those handled in farm, chemical, nutrition, and utilization research.

The purpose of my subcommittee hearings was to look for ways to strengthen the Agriculture Department's ability to deal with marketing problems. I believe that the possibilities of improving the marketing of farm and food products are almost limitless. But it appears that the Department's effectiveness in this entire field has been severely restricted by its failure to coordinate its many marketing activities under a single administrative head as directed by the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

Action should be taken to develop a vigorous marketing program in the Department, planned and carried out by people trained in the field and who will devote their entire attention to it. I hope such action will grow out of our subcommittee hearings. It is certain to prove beneficial to both agriculture producers and consumers.

* * * *

APPRECIATED MEMENTO -- A plaque now hanging on the wall of my office will always keep fresh in my mind the barbecue given for me by the great people of South Texas in September. The plaque was presented to me on that occasion. It is signed by twenty dedicated young South Texas students who are now at work in child care centers in the Valley, after receiving training in the field from Incarnate Word College, San Antonio. They need additional training, but they must work and aid their families financially. I was glad to be able to help obtain a small grant from HEW to provide tuition and books so they can study at night. The plaque takes note of my effort, and it makes me feel good every time I look at it.

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USEFUL PUBLICITY -- Coastal area workers put out of work by Tropical Storm Fern are eligible for disaster unemployment assistance from the Texas Unemployment Commission. This time we were able to help get this fact publicized well in advance of the cutoff date for applications. The unemployment pay, based on a percentage of the individual's normal salary, will be paid to persons who were out of work from September 9 through September 30, with applications to be filed with local employment commission offices within 60 days. This information was widely published in South Texas.

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VISITORS -- Visiting my office from home this week were: Mr N D Flados of McAllen; Mr Alejandro Moreno, Jr. of San Juan; and Ms Elda A Trevino of Elsa.

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